

Policy Statement on the School Administrator Shortage

**Adopted by the State Board of Education
March 19, 1998**

Effective leadership is essential to schools' ability to successfully educate the citizens of the future. School administrators provide that leadership.

Iowa has a long history of educational excellence, and skilled administrators at all levels have been a major reason for that success. Now, a shortage of qualified school administrators is affecting Iowa—a shortage that could seriously hinder the state's ability to build on its tradition of excellence and create schools to meet the needs of its citizens in the 21st century.

The evidence of an administrator shortage is plentiful. The average number of applicants for a superintendent's position in Iowa has declined seriously and a similar decrease has occurred in the number of applicants for other administrative positions. While the number of applicants is declining, qualified Iowa educators are choosing not to take administrative positions. Over 2,000 Iowans who are endorsed for administrative positions are currently employed in the education system in non-administrative positions. Women and racial/ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented among the state's school administrators. Compared with other states Iowa ranks low in the number of women superintendents and in the number of racial/ethnic minorities in all administrative positions. Finally, enrollment in graduate-level school administration programs has declined state-wide.

Iowa's school administrator shortage is not a recent phenomenon and it will not be corrected quickly. Currently, practicing administrators and representatives of professional organizations and higher education are implementing a variety of strategies to address the issue. The State Board supports those efforts.

In order to reduce administrator shortages and to strengthen school leadership, the State Board of Education:

- **Endorses** recruitment efforts that identify teachers and students for school administrator programs, including specific strategies to recruit women and minorities for school leadership.
- **Encourages** higher education institutions to collaborate with a broad range of education stakeholders in order to rethink administrative roles, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of administrator preparation programs and to redesign those programs to reflect the leadership requirements of 21st century schools.

- **Recommends** collaboration among administrator preparation programs, the Board of Educational Examiners, area education agencies, school districts, School Administrators of Iowa, the Department of Education and the State Board of Education in order to redesign administrator preparation to include leadership development and mentorships.
- **Supports** licensure requirements that establish research-based performance standards essential to school leadership.